1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
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the warpath.[1] So they say. If you do not become an individual warranted to lead a war party, yet mistaking yourself for one although really an ordinary warrior, you "throw away a man," your act will be considered most disgraceful. A mourner might harm you in revenge for the fact that you have caused him to mourn, and burn you with embers. Your people will all be sad, both on account of your disgrace and on account of the pain inflicted upon you.

My son, not with the blessing of one of the spirits merely, nor with the blessing of twenty, for that matter, can you go on the warpath. You must have the blessing of all the spirits above the earth, and of all those on the earth, and of all those who are pierced through the earth;[2] of all those under the earth; of all those who are under the water; of all those that are on the sides of the earth, i. e., all the four winds; of the Disease-giver;[3] of the Sun; of the Daylight;[4] of the Moon; of the Earth; and of all those who are in control of war powers—with the blessings of all these deities must you be provided before you can lead a successful war party.

My son, if you cast off dress[5] men will be benefited by your deeds. You will be an aid to all your people. If your people honor you, it will be good. And they will like you even the more if you obtain a

[1] Among the Winnebago any individual who has been blessed with the necessary powers to lead a warpath may do so, but it is absolutely essential that his blessing directing him be of such a nature that every possible contingency is included therein. Such complete blessings are, of course, not common nor can they be obtained except through unusual exertions. If you are blessed with just the ordinary or incomplete war powers and you nevertheless undertake to lead a war party, you may either be defeated or perhaps only partially successful, and, what is worse, you may lose some of the warriors who started with you. Your recklessness has thus caused the death of some of your fellow tribesmen. It is understood that every warrior before starting on the warpath turn his "blessing" over to the chief of the tribe for examination, and if the chief considers it complete the warrior is not held responsible for the lack of success or loss of life. If the chief does not consider an individual's blessing sufficient to justify the object he has in view and forbids the warrior to go, and if the latter nevertheless goes, or granted the case he does not even submit his "blessing" to the chief for scrutiny, and sneaks out, then he is held directly responsible for any mishap on the warpath. The relatives of any individual thus killed may hold the war leader responsible and demand compensation; or, as is indicated by ll. a few lines later, a mourner of s , one who has been placed in mourning by the criminal foolhardiness of the war leader) might attack, perhaps kill him, without being held guilty of any crime. It must of course be understood that such occurrences would seldom take place. We must, however, remember throughout these "teachings" that one of the objects of the old men was to draw the most alluring pictures of the rewards that would fall to the lot of those who followed in the footsteps of their ancestors, and, on the other hand, to draw the most lurid pictures of the wretchedness that befell those who deviated, no matter in what details, from the customs sanctioned by age.

[2] According to the Winnebago creation myth, when Earthmaker, the creator of the earth, first came to consciousness and began creating life the earth on which we were to live was in continual motion, and nothing that the former could do seemed to be able to stop it. From above he threw down grass, trees, etc., but all was of no avail. Finally he hit upon the happy expedient of pinning the earth down at the four corners by means of four enormous snakes, or, as some say, by means of four mythical animals known as water spirits. It is to these that the old man is referring here. According to the story, even these were of no avail, and it was only when he finally placed four mythical beings known as "Island Weights" at the four corners that our planet stopped spinning. These "Island Weights" seem to be identical with the spirits of the four cardinal points, but they are not to be confused with the four winds mentioned later.

[3] A deity conceived of as dealing out life-giving powers from one half of his body and death-giving powers from the other half. He is also supposed to disseminate disease. Disease-giver is a literal translation of the Winnebago word, but this probably does not convey the exact meaning. There seems to be no parallel to this peculiar deity among the other Siouan tribes or among the Algonquins.

[4] Daylight or light is conceived of as something different and distinct from the sun.

[5] That is, if you give away things frequently, especially to your people.